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AFRL awards contracts under DARPA program

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ROME, N.Y. - The Air Force Research Laboratory Information directorate awarded eight contracts, with a value in excess of $22.5 million in May. They were acting as an agent for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, the Affordable Moving Surface Target Engagement, or AMSTE, program.

The AMSTE program is a DARPA initiative to investigate and develop technologies to affordably engage moving surface targets, such as tanks, tactical ballistic missile transporters and small boats.

The program will explore technologies to tightly network Ground Moving Target Indication sensors to provide fire-control-quality tracks of sufficient accuracy to direct inexpensive munitions against moving surface targets. If successful, the AMSTE Phase I efforts will lead to a series of experiments to investigate critical technologies, explore performance boundaries and demonstrate potential operational utility.

Four contractors are performing Weapon System Trade Studies, or WSTS, that will assess the feasibility of netted fire control for surface moving targets and will identify follow-on experiments to investigate critical AMSTE system components. These 15-month trade studies will evaluate candidate AMSTE weapon systems and predict system performance for different mixes of sensors, tracking algorithms, data links and weapons.

The WSTS contractors are: Raytheon Electronic Systems, El Segundo, Calif. ($2,093,094); Northrop-Grumman Melbourne, Melbourne, Fla. ($2,590,197); TRW, Fairfax, Va. ($2,032,948); and The Boeing Company (Phantom Works), Seattle, Wash. ($1,993,584).

Four additional contractors are developing and evaluating Precision Fire Control Tracking, or PFCT, algorithms. The PFCT effort, which will last 24 to 30 months, concentrates on developing and assessing the critical technology of tracking and targeting a surface-mover using data from a network of distributed sensors.

PFCT contractors are: Alphatech, Burlington, Mass. ($3,499,996); Northrop-Grumman Melbourne, Melbourne, Fla. ($3,473,976); Pacific Sierra Research, Arlington, Va. ($3,449,169); and Orincon, San Diego, Calif. ($3,392,875).

The Information directorate is providing contracting and technical support for the AMSTE program through its Information Fusion Technology and Contracting branches. @